



Clark County Municipal Court

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Eugene S. Nevius, Judge

Representative Ryan Smith
Chair, House Finance Committee
77 South High Street, 13th floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215

April 26, 2017

Dear Representative Smith:

The Judges of the Clark County Municipal Court learned late last evening of the proposal to consolidate the operations of the Clark County Municipal Court Clerk's office with those of the Clark County Court of Common Pleas Clerk. We ask that the amendment doing so be stricken from HB49 to allow time for all stakeholders to examine the consequences of such a change and determine if anticipated cost savings could be realized.

Pursuant to the Supreme Court of Ohio's 2015 Statistical Report (the most recent available), a total of 814 *new* civil and 758 *new* criminal cases were filed in the Clark County Court of Common Pleas. Contrast those numbers with 3415 *new* civil and 16,610 *new* criminal and traffic filings in the Clark County Municipal Court the same year. Of the 16,610, 15,064 of those cases were cases requiring the Clerk to transmit sentencing information to the BMV, so accurate driving records can be maintained. When law enforcement stops a driver, the only way they know the status of a driver's license or the number of prior OVI convictions that driver might have, is the daily transmission of such information to the BMV by municipal court clerks across the State. These numbers are new filings only and do not include pending or terminated cases. Given these numbers, it is unrealistic to believe the current Common Pleas Clerk's Office staff could absorb the increased workload. Added staff, be it current municipal clerk's office staff or new hires, would be a necessity.

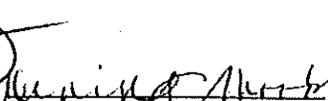
The two offices currently use different software. The Common Pleas Clerk's technological support is provided by Clark County's information technology department. As the County Commissioners have accepted the IT Director's resignation effective this month, that department is currently in flux. Our technological support is provided by the City of Springfield's IT department. The current municipal clerk does not rely on outside technological support. All case files are imaged and available on line. This is not the practice of the common pleas clerk.

These are but a few examples of differences in the offices as they exist. It is imperative that all factors impacting day-to-day operations be considered in order that both courts can continue to efficiently and effectively administer justice and address the need of litigants. Such analysis requires time as well as careful consideration.

We are happy to meet with all interested parties to further discuss this issue.

Sincerely,


Eugene S. Nevius, Administrative/
Presiding Judge


Denise L. Moody, Judge


Thomas E. Trampe, Judge

**CC: Clifford A. Rosenberger, Speaker of the House
Representative J. Kyle Koehler
Representative Bill Seitz
Senator Bob D. Hackett**